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LETTER DATED 9 APRIL 1997 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF ITALY TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to submit a report on the multinational protection force for Albania. The report is submitted pursuant to the requirement set out in paragraph 9 of Security Council resolution 1101 (1997) of 28 March 1997, in which the Council requested the Member States participating in the multinational protection force to provide periodic reports, at least every two weeks, through the Secretary-General, to the Council, the first such report to be made no later than 14 days after the adoption of the resolution, inter alia, specifying the parameters and modalities of the operation on the basis of consultations between those Member States and the Government of Albania.

I should be grateful if you could have the text of the present letter and the report (see annex) circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Giulio TERZI DI SANT'AGATA
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* Reissued for technical reasons.

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Annex

Report to the United Nations Security Council on the operation of the multinational protection force for Albania

I. INTRODUCTION AND CURRENT SITUATION

1. On 28 March 1997, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1101 (1997), by which it authorized the establishment of a temporary and limited multinational protection force to facilitate in a neutral and impartial way the safe and prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance and to help create a secure environment for the missions of international organizations in Albania, including those providing humanitarian assistance.

2. In adopting resolution 1101 (1997), the Security Council took note, inter alia, of Decision 160 of the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) of 27 March 1997 (S/1997/259, annex II), which refers to the Conclusions of the General Affairs Council of the European Union (EU) on 24 March 1997 (ibid., annex III).

3. An EU advance team, including representatives of OSCE, the Western European Union (WEU) and Council of Europe visited Albania from 26 March to 2 April 1997 and had consultations with the Albanian authorities, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The team encountered a unanimous desire for a foreign security force to allow urgent assistance to the country, in particular, in the form of humanitarian aid.

4. Since the adoption of resolution 1101 (1997) the situation in Albania has remained serious. There is no evidence of improvement. Government control of law and order has yet to be achieved in a significant part of the country. A matter of grave concern is the humanitarian situation, which risks being further aggravated by the lack of security and the increasing need for basic humanitarian assistance.

II. MULTINATIONAL PROTECTION FORCE

5. Pursuant to resolution 1101 (1997), a multinational protection force, limited in size, has been organized. According to current planning, it will consist of about 6,000 troops. So far the following countries have committed to contribute to the force: Austria, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Romania, Spain and Turkey.

Political guidance

6. Within the context of Security Council resolution 1101 (1997), the troop-contributing countries have agreed that the political guidance of the force will be provided by a Steering Committee, consisting of the Political Directors of the troop-contributing countries and the Commander of the operation. It will be chaired by Italy with France as Vice-Chairman. The Committee will follow the overall situation on the ground and monitor the activities of the force to

ensure compliance with the Security Council's mandate. The Committee will also bring to the attention of the Governments of the troop-contributing countries issues that may require special consideration.

7. The Steering Committee will be convened regularly on a weekly basis. It will be chaired by the Italian Political Director, Ambassador Amedeo de Franchis. A secretariat has been established at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is open to the participation of the troop-contributing countries. The first meeting of the Committee took place in Rome on 4 April 1997.

Cooperation with Albanian authorities

8. The Steering Committee will keep in close contact with the Government of Albania. Consultations with the Albanian authorities have been initiated to ensure a clear base for the mission at the highest levels, political as well as military. In the meantime, the Albanian authorities have repeatedly appealed for the prompt dispatch of the multinational protection force. A presentation of the mission of the force to the Albanian Government will take place in Rome on 14 April in the framework of the Steering Committee.

Relations with international organizations

9. The Steering Committee will liaise closely with the United Nations, OSCE and EU as well as with all international organizations involved in humanitarian assistance to Albania. It will provide regular information to the Security Council in accordance with resolution 1101 (1997), and to the international organizations involved. It has been agreed that representatives of those international organizations shall be invited to the Steering Committee as observers.

Organization of the force

10. Several measures have been undertaken:

- Admiral Guido Venturoni, Chief of the Italian Defence Staff, has been appointed Commander of the Operation, and General Luciano Forlani, Commander of the Force;

- Multinational military planning was initiated by the Italian General Staff, with the active contribution of the other participating countries, in order to define the force - its tasks, organization, timing and areas of deployment:

(i) At the strategic level, the planning activities were based on operational guidelines set by the Italian General Staff and submitted to the other participating countries on 2 April in Rome, to be approved by 10 April;

(ii) Operational planning at the force level began on 3 April, with the participation of the troop-contributing countries;

(iii) Site-surveying missions and technical contacts with the Albanian authorities are under way in order to establish the necessary agreements for the force deployment.

Parameters and modalities of the operation

11. The force guidelines set the parameters and modalities for the mission to Albania: (a) to secure the main entry points into the country in order to guarantee security conditions for the flow and distribution of humanitarian aid; (b) to help create a secure environment for the missions of international organizations in Albania, in particular with reference to those providing humanitarian assistance. The force is to carry out its mission in an impartial way, in close cooperation with the Albanian authorities and the relevant international organizations. The force will be provided with rules of engagement in accordance with the mandate, enabling it to accomplish its mission and protect itself while complying with the international principles of proportionality, the minimum use of force and the requirement to minimize the potential for collateral damage.

Force implementation

12. The deployment of the force in Albania is envisaged for the week beginning 14 April, at the same time as the first shipments of international humanitarian aid.

13. The force will first of all ensure the operational capability of the main transportation terminals and lines of communication, in order to allow the safe inflow and delivery of humanitarian aid at those locations.

14. The force's operational concept provides for the control of a limited number of key points of entry into the country to enable the prompt transport and stockpiling of aid. This phase would be followed by a second phase of strengthening and expansion of the posture, with the deployment in the area of the bulk of the forces, which would enable them to ensure freedom of movement on the main roads connecting the key terminals as well as additional inhabited centres or terminals, as appropriate. Afterwards the posture would gradually be expanded in order to extend the security framework to other key areas and lines of communication. The third phase will entail the withdrawal from the area at the end of the mission, whose duration as established by the Security Council resolution is of three months, which could be extended as appropriate on the basis of a further decision.

A general Memorandum of Understanding with the Albanian Government will serve as framework Memorandum of Understanding to cover the logistical, administrative and host-country support services related to the deployment of the multinational force. The general Memorandum of Understanding will be supplemented by technical arrangements between the Albanian Government and each participating country.

Reconnaissance missions have already started.

III. CONCLUSIONS

15. The mission of the force, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1101 (1997), is to facilitate the safe and prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance and to help create a secure environment for the missions of international organizations in Albania, including those providing humanitarian assistance. The purpose of the multinational protection force as set out in resolution 1101 (1997) is therefore a strictly humanitarian one.

16. The force is only one component of the humanitarian response of the international community to the Albanian crisis. While the force carries out its mandate, the international community should focus on restoration of normal conditions of life in Albania and political reconciliation, bearing in mind the necessity of longer-term solutions to the deep-rooted problems of the country.

17. The countries contributing to the force will continue to provide, pursuant to their obligations under resolution 1101 (1997), timely reports to the Security Council on the implementation of the resolution.